

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 016394 TOSEC 010129

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:MLDURKEE:MJK
APPROVED BY EUR/WE - MR. BARBOUR
S/S - MR. ORTIZ
EUR - MR. ETNG
NSC - TEXT RCVD FROM WHITE HOUSE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE
USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 016394 TOSEC 010129

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: INFO, SP, UK

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER WILSON

PLEASE CONVEY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT FORD
TO PRIME MINISTER WILSON IN RESPONSE TO THE PRIME
MINISTER'S LETTER OF DECEMBER 22.

BEGIN TEXT: DEAR MR. PRIME MINISTER:

IT WAS VERY GOOD OF YOU TO PROVIDE ME WITH A FULLER
EXPRESSION OF YOUR THINKING ON SPAIN, IN YOUR MESSAGE
OF DECEMBER 22, 1975. YOUR ANALYSIS AND OURS
ARE VERY SIMILAR, ALTHOUGH WE DIFFER SOMEWHAT AS TO THE
POLICY CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN.

I AGREE THAT THE SITUATION IN SPAIN WILL REMAIN FLUID
FOR SOME TIME. THE KING HAS OUTLINED A GENERALLY
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PROGRESSIVE PLATFORM, HOWEVER, AND THE CABINET WILL

REQUIRE BOTH TIME AND DETERMINATION TO IMPLEMENT IT. GIVEN THE RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF THE CONTENDING FORCES, THE KING AND HIS MINISTERS WILL NEED TO COMBINE PROGRESS WITH CONTINUITY. THE PACE THEY SET WILL NOT SATISFY ALL

OBSERVERS OR ALL SPANIARDS, BUT I BELIEVE THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE PRESSED TO MOVE MORE RAPIDLY THAN THE POLITICAL PRESSURES PERMIT. WHENEVER POSSIBLE, WE SHOULD ALL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS NOW IN MOTION, AS YOU PROPOSE TO DO.

THE KING HAS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED THAT HE WANTS TO MOVE BUT IS OPPOSED BY HARD-LINE ELEMENTS. TO BE EFFECTIVE, THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE USED TO STRENGTHEN THE KING AND HIS CABINET.

FURTHER, WE SHOULD AVOID HAVING THE DEBATE ABOUT SPAIN'S TIES WITH EUROPE FOCUS ON LIBERALIZATION AS A PRICE SPAIN MUST PAY. EVEN MODERATE SPANIARDS ARE RESENTFUL OF FOREIGN PRESSURES. IN MY OPINION, IT WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE TO EMPHASIZE THE BENEFITS OF FULL PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS -- THROUGH INDUCEMENTS SUCH AS VISITS, HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENTS AND TRADE NEGOTIATIONS -- RATHER THAN TO THREATEN CONTINUED EXCLUSION FROM NATO AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

IT IS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT THE UNITED STATES INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE OUR EUROPEAN PARTNERS TO TAKE WHATEVER STEPS THEY FIND POSSIBLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SPAIN'S EUROPEAN IDENTITY IS RECOGNIZED AND VALUED. WE WANT TO WORK CLOSELY WITH YOU ON THIS AND TO TAILOR OUR EFFORTS TO POLITICAL REALITIES IN EUROPE. I REALIZE THAT NOT ALL OF OUR PARTNERS SHARE OUR VIEW THAT THEIR POSITIVE GESTURES NOW WILL BE MORE FRUITFUL THAN HOLDING BACK UNTIL GREATER CHANGES ARE MADE. TO ME, IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF PRESERVING THE OLD REGIME BUT RATHER OF ENCOURAGING PROGRESS WITH MINIMAL RISK OF PROVOKING RESISTANCE THAT MIGHT STOP ALL CHANGE.

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ON A PURELY BILATERAL MATTER, I TRUST OUR NEW AGREEMENT WITH SPAIN CAN BE CONCLUDED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. QUITE APART FROM THE OBVIOUS MILITARY ADVANTAGES FOR WESTERN SECURITY, WE SEE THIS COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT AS VERY USEFUL FOR THE BROAD CONTACTS IT GIVES US WITH LEADERS IN VARIOUS FIELDS THROUGHOUT SPAIN.

I WOULD LIKE TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH AS THE SPANISH

SITUATION DEVELOPS, BOTH VIA THE SECRETARIES OF STATE
AND OUR OWN EXCHANGES. OUR DIFFERENCES SEEM TO BE
MATTERS OF EMPHASIS RATHER THAN OF APPROACH. YOUR
INTENTION TO GIVE THE KING THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT SEEMS
TO ME THE BEST GENERAL APPROACH. WE SHALL DO THE SAME IN
OUR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST AND SYMPATHY, VISITS, AND

STRENGTHENING OF CONTACTS.

SINCERELY: GERALD R. FORD. END OF TEXT.

SIGNED ORIGINAL WILL BE FORWARDED FOR LATER DELIVERY
TO THE PRIME MINISTER. ROBINSON

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TAGS: PFOR, SP, UK, US, (FORD, GERALD R), (WILSON, HAROLD)
To: LONDON
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